



Just the Facts

57-006-1193

...About Pinkeye (Conjunctivitis)



Pinkeye is an infection of the covering of the eyeball. It is usually caused by a bacteria, but it can also be due to a virus. Other causes of pinkeye are allergy and excessive rubbing of the eyes. A red eye can be caused by a foreign body or trauma to the eye.

Children with pinkeye complain of a scratchy feeling or pain in their eyes and may have a lot of tears and pus discharge. The infection turns the whites of the eyes pink or red. When the child wakes up after a sleep, pus or discharge often makes the eyelids stick together.

Pinkeye is easily spread when:

- * A child with the infection touches the discharge and then touches another child.
- * An uninfected child touches an infected child's eye discharge and then touches his or her own eyes.
- * An adult wipes an infected child's eyes and then touches his or her eyes or another person's eyes.

Pinkeye that is caused by bacteria can be treated and cured with an antibiotic. Antibiotics can also stop the infection from spreading to others. There is no treatment for pinkeye that is caused by a virus.

THINGS PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS CAN DO:

- ◆ Watch your child for signs of pinkeye if another child has it.
- ◆ Contact your physician if your child has pinkeye. It is not easy to tell whether the infection is caused by bacteria or a virus. It may be necessary for the physician to prescribe antibiotics for the child.
- ◆ Ensure you and your child wash your hands very carefully after touching or wiping the child's eyes.
- ◆ Do not let your child share towels or washcloths with anyone else, because this could spread the infection.
- ◆ If your child's eyes have pus (yellow, thick) or a discharge, he or she should not return to the child care facility until after taking an antibiotic for one full day and until after a physician has cleared the child to return.

◆ Child Care Facilities

◆ Information

◆ Treatment

For additional information contact your local health consultant or health care provider.

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